EXPERIENCE

AND

PERSONAL NARRATIVE

OF

UNCLE TOM JONES.

WHO WAS FOR FORTY YEARS A SLAVE.

PORTRAIT.

ALSO THE

SURPRISING ADVENTURES OF

WILD TOM,

OF THE ISLAND RETREAT.

A FUGITIVE NEGRO FROM SOUTH CAROLINA.

BOSTON:

PUBLISHED BY H. B. SKINNER,
No. 15 FRIEND ST.

INTRODUCTION.

A suffering brother would affectionately present this simple story of deep personal wrongs to the earnest friends of the slave. He asks you to buy and read it, for in so doing you will help one who needs your sympathy and aid, and will receive, in the perusal of this simple narrative, a more fervent conviction of the necessity and blessedness of toiling for the members of the one great brotherhood, who may suffer and die, ignorant and despairing, in the vast prison-land of the South. "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye also unto them.

THE AUTHOR.

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SURPRISING ADVENTURES

OF

UNCLE TOM JONES:

FOR FORTY YEARS A SLAVE.

I was born a slave. My recollections of early life are associated with poverty, suffering and shame. I was made to feel, in my boyhood's first experience, that I was inferior and degraded, and that I must pass through life in a dependent and suffering condition. The experience of forty-three years, which were passed by me in slavery, was one of dark fears and darker realities. John Hawes was my first master. He lived in Hanover County, N. C., between the Black and South Rivers, and was the owner of a large plantation called Hawes' Plantation. He had over fifty slaves. I remained with my parents nine years. They were both slaves, owned by John Hawes. They had six children, Richard, Alexander, Charles, Sarah, myself, and John. I remember well that dear old cabin, with its clay floor and mud chimney, in which, for nine years, I enjoyed the presence and love of my wretched parents.

Father and mother tried to make it a happy place for their dear children. *They* worked late into the night many and many a time to get a little simple furniture for their home and the home of their children; and they spent many hours of willing toil to stop up the chinks between the logs of their poor hut, that they and their children might be protected from the storm and the cold. I can testify from my own painful experience, to the deep and fond affection which the slave cherishes in his heart for his home and its dear ones. We have no other tie to link us to the human family, but our fervent love for those who are *with* us and of us in relations of sympathy and devotedness, in wrongs and wretchedness. My dear parents were conscious of the desperate and incurable woe of their position and destiny; and the lot of inevitable suffering in store for their beloved

children. They talked about our coming misery, and they lifted up their voices and wept aloud, as they spoke of our being torn from them and sold off to the dreaded slave trader, perhaps never to see them or hear from them a word of fond love. I am a father, and have had the same feelings of unspeakable anguish, as I have looked upon my precious babes, and have thought of the ignorance, degradation and woe which they must endure as slaves. The great God who knoweth all the secrets of the earth, and He only, knows the bitter sorrow I now feel, when I think of my four dear children who are slaves, torn from me and consigned to hopeless servitude by the iron hand of ruthless wrong. I love those children with all a father's fondness.

Mr. Hawes was a very severe and cruel master. He kept no overseer, and supplied his slaves with but a very scanty allowance of food and clothing.

During the planting and harvest season, we had to work early and late. The men and women were called at three o'clock in the morning, and were worked on the plantation until it was dark at night. After that they must prepare their food for supper and for the breakfast of the next day, and to attend to other duties of their own dear homes.

In the month of November, and through the winter season, the men and women worked in the fields, clearing up the new land, chopping and burning bushes, burning tar kilns, and digging ditches. They worked together, poorly clad, and suffering from the bitter cold and wet of those winter months. Women, wives and mothers, daughters and sisters, on that plantation, were compelled to toil on cold, stormy days in the open field, while the piercing wind and driving storm benumed their limbs, and almost froze the tears that came forth out of their cold and desolate hearts. Little boys, and girls, too, worked and cried, toting brush to the fires, husking the corn, watching the stock, and running out errands for master and mistress, for their three sons, Enoch, Edward and John, and constantly receiving from them scoldings and beatings as their reward.

Thus passed nine years of my life; years of suffering, the shuddering memory of which is deeply fixed in my heart.

These nine years of wretchedness passed, and a change came for me. My master sold me to Mr. Jones of Washington, N. C., distant forty-five miles from Hawes' plantation. Mr. Jones sent his slave driver, a colored man, named Abraham, to conduct me to my new home in Washington. I was at home with my mother when he came. He looked in at the door, and called to me. "Tom, you must go with me." His looks were

ugly and his voice was savage. I was very much afraid, and began to cry, holding on to my mother's clothes and begging her to protect me, and not let the man take me away. Mother wept bitterly, and, in the midst of her loud sobbings, cried out in broken words, "I can't save you, Tommy; master has sold you, you must go." She threw her arms around me, and while the hot tears fell on my face, she strained me to her heart. There she held me, sobbing and mourning, till the brutal Abraham came in, snatched me away, hurried me out of the house where I was born, my only home, and tore me away from the dear mother who loved me as no other friend could do. She followed him, imploring a moment's delay and weeping aloud, to the road, where he turned around, and striking at her with his heavy cowhide, fiercely ordered her to stop bawling, and go back into the house.

Thus was I snatched from my loving parents, and from the true affection of the dear ones of home. For thirteen weary years did my heart turn in its yearnings to that precious home. And then at the age of twenty-two, I was permitted to revisit my early home. I found it all desolate; the family all broken up; father was sold and gone; Richard, Alexander, Charles, Sarah, and John were sold and gone. Mother prematurely old, heart-broken, utterly desolate, weak and dying, alone remained. I saw her, and wept once more on her bosom. I went back to my chains with a deeper woe in my heart than I had ever felt before. There was but one thought of joy in my wretched consciousness, and that was, that my kind and precious mother would soon be at rest in the grave. And then, too, I remember, I mused with deep earnestness on death, as the only friend the poor slave had. And I wished that I, too, might lie down by my mother's side, and die with her in her loving embrace.

My journey to Washington with the heartless Abraham was a very sad one. We walked all the way. He strode along in stern gloom and silence, too fast for my young feet to keep pace; and I began to feel that I must stop and rest. It was bitter cold, too, and I was poorly clad to bear the keen air of a January day. My limbs were weary with travel and stiff with cold. I could not go on at the rate I had done, and so I turned to my guide, and begged him to take me into some hut and let me rest and get warm. He cursed me, and told me to keep silence and come along, or he would warm me with the cowhide. Oh, I thought how cruel and hopeless my lot! Would that I could fall down here and die. And I did fall down. We had just passed through a soft, wet place, and it seemed then to me that I was frozen. And I fell down on my dark,

cold way, unable to proceed. I was then carried into a slave's cabin, and allowed to warm and rest. It was nearly midnight when I arrived with my conductor at my place of exile and suffering. And certainly no heart could be more entirely wretched than I was when I threw my weary, aching body on my cold, hard bed.

The next morning I was called into the presence of Mr. Jones, my new master, and my work was assigned to me. I was to take care of the horse, sweep the rooms, and to bring wood from the wharf on my head for the fires at the house and store, with many other duties. From the first dawn of day till ten and eleven, and sometimes twelve at night, I could hardly find one moment's time for rest. And, Oh, how the memory of that year of constant toil and weariness is imprinted on my heart, an impression of appalling sorrow. My dreams are still haunted with the agony of that year. I had just been torn from my home; my yearning heart was deprived of the sweet sympathy of those to whose memory I then clung, and to whom my heart still turns with irrepressible and unutterable longings. I was torn from them and put into a circle of cold, selfish and cruel hearts, and made to perform labors too great for my young strength. And yet I lived through that year, just as the slave lives on through weary years of suffering, on which no ray or light shines, save that which hope of a better, happier future gives even to the desolate bondman; but I lived through it, with all its darkness and sorrow. That year I received my first whipping. I had failed one day to finish my allotted task. It seemed to me that I had done my best; but, somehow, that day, thoughts of home came so fresh and tender into my mind, and, along with these thoughts, a sense of my utter hopeless desolation came in and took such a strong hold of my heart, that I sank down a helpless, heart-broken child. My tasks for that day were neglected. The next morning my master made me strip off my shirt, and then whipped me with the cowhide till the blood ran trickling down upon the floor. My master was very profane, and, with dreadful oaths, he assured me that there was only one way for me to avoid a repetition of this terrible discipline, and that was, to do my tasks every day, sick or well.

But this year went by, and my duties were changed, and my lot was made a little easier. The cook, Fanny, died, and I was put into her place. I still had to get wood and keep the fires in the house, and, after the work of cooking, setting the table, clearing away and washing the dishes, there was always something to be done for my mistress. I got but little time to rest; but I got enough to eat, which I had not done the year before.

I was by the comfortable fire, a good part of the cold winter weather, instead of being exposed to the cold and wet, without warm clothing, as I had been the year before, and my labor was not so hard this year as it had been the last.

My mistress complained of me at length, that I was not so obedient as I ought to be, and so I was taken from the house into the store. My business there was to open and sweep out the store in the morning, and get all the things ready for the accommodation of customers who might come in during the day, Then I had to bring out and deliver all heavy articles that might be called for such as salt, large quantities of which were sold in the store; ship stores, grain, etc., etc. I had also to hold myself ready to run on any errand my master or his clerk, David Cogdell, might wish to send me on. While Cogdell remained in the store, I enjoyed a *gleam* of happiness. He was very kind to me, never giving me a cross word or a sour look; always ready to show me how to do anything which I did not understand, and to perform little acts of kindness to me. But his kindness and generosity to the poor slaves was very offensive to my master and to other slave-holders; and so, at length, Mr. Jones turned him off, though he was compelled to acknowledge, at the same time, that he was the most trustworthy and valuable assistant he had ever had in his store.

After my master dismissed Mr. C., he tried to get along with me alone in the store. He kept the books and waited upon the most genteel of his customers, leaving me to do the rest of the work. This went on six months, when he declared that he could not bear this confinement any longer; and so he got a white boy to come and enter as clerk, to stay till he was of age. James Dixon was a poor boy, about my own age, and when he came into the store, could hardly read or write. He was accordingly engaged a part of each day with his books and writing. I saw him studying, and asked him to let me see his book. When he felt in a good humor, James was very kind and obliging. The great trouble with him was, that his fits of ill-humor were much more frequent than his times of good feeling. It happened, however, that he was on good terms with himself when I asked him to show me his book, and so he let me take it, and look at it, and he answered very kindly many questions which I asked him about books and schools and learning. He told me that he was trying to get learning enough to fit him to do a good business for himself after he should get through with Mr. Jones. He told me that a man who had learning would always find friends, and get along very well in the world without having to work hard, while those who had no learning would

nave no friends, and be compelled to work very hard for a poor living all their days. This was all new to me, and furnished me topics for wondering thought for days afterwards. The result of my meditations was, that an intense, burning desire to learn to read and write took possession of my mind, occupying me wholly in waking hours, and stirring up earnest thoughts in my soul even when I slept. The question, which then took hold of my whole consciousness was, how can I get a book to begin? James told me that, a spelling-book was the first one necessary in getting learning. So I contrived how I might obtain a spelling-book. At length, after much study, I hit upon this plan: I cleaned the boots of Mr. David Smith, Jr., who carried on the printing business, in Wilmington, and edited the Cape Fear Recorder. He had always appeared to me to be a very kind man. I thought I would get him to aid me in procuring a spelling-book. So I went one morning, with a beating heart, into his office, and asked him to sell me a spelling-book. He looked at me in silence, and with close attention, for some time, and asked me what I wanted it for? I told him I wanted to learn to read. He shook his head, and replied, "No, Thomas; it would not answer for me to sell you a book to learn out of; *you* will only get yourself into trouble if you attempt it; and I advise you to get that foolish notion out of your head as quickly as you can."

David's brother, Peter Smith, kept a book and stationary store under the printing-office, and I next applied to him for a book, determined to persevere till I obtained this coveted treasure. He asked me the same question that his brother David had done, and with the same searching, suspicious look. By my previous repulse I had discovered that I could not get a spelling-book, if I told what I wanted to do with it, and so I told a lie, in order to get it. I answered, that I wanted it for a white boy, naming one that lived at my master's, and that he had given me the money to get it with, and had asked me to call at the store and buy it. The book was then handed out to me, the money taken in return, and I left, feeling very rich with my long desired treasure. I got out of the store, and, looking round to see that no one observed me, I hid my book in my bosom, and hurried on to my work, consicous that a new era in my life was opening upon me through the possession of this book. That conseiousness at once awakened new thoughts, purposes and hopes, a new life, and aot, in my experience. My mind was excited. The words spoken by James Dixon of the great advantages of learning, made me intensely anxious to learn. I was a slave, and I knew that the whole community was in league to keep the poor slave in ignorance and chains. Yet I longed to be free, and to be

able to move the minds of other men by my thoughts. It seemed to me now, that, if I could learn to read and write, this learning might — nay, I really thought it would, point out to me the way to freedom, influence, and real, secure happiness. So I hurried on to my master's store, and, watching my opportunity to do it, safe from curious eyes, I hid my book with the utmost care, under some liquor barrels in the smokehouse. The first opportunity I improved to examine it. I looked it over with the most intense eagerness, turned over its leaves, and tried to discover what the new and strange chracters which I saw in its pages might mean. But I found it a vain endeavor. I could understand a picture, and from it make out a story of immediate interest to my mind. But I could not associate any thought or fact with these crooked letters with which my primmer was filled. So the next day I sought a favorable moment, and asked James to tell me where a scholar must begin in order to learn to read, and how. He laughed at my ignorance, and, taking his spelling-book, showed me the alphabet in large and small letters on the same page. I asked him the name of the first letter, pointing it out, he told me A; so of the next, and so on through the alphabet. I managed to remember A and B, and I studied and looked out the same letters in many other parts of the book. And so I fixed in a tenacious memory the names of the two first letters of the alphabet. But I found I could not get on without help, and so I applied to James again to show me the letters and tell me their names. This time he suspected me of trying to learn to read myself, and he plied me with questions till he ascertained that I was, in good earnest, entering upon an effort to get knowledge. At this discovery, he manifested a good deal of indignation. He told me, in scorn, that it was not for such as *me* to try to improve, that I was a *slave*, and that it was not proper for *me* to learn to read. He threatened to tell my master, and at length, by his hard language, my anger was fully aroused, and I answered taunt with taunt. He called me a poor, miserable nigger; and I called him a poor, ignorant servant boy. While we were engaged in loud and angry words, of mutual defiance and scorn, my master came into the store. Mr. Jones had never given me a whipping since the time I have already described, during my first year of toil, want and suffering in his service. But he had now caught me in the unpardonable offence of giving saucy language to a white boy, and one, too, who was in his employ. Without stopping to make any inquiries, he took down the cow-hide, and gave me a severe whipping. He told me never to talk back to a white man on pain of flogging. I suppose this law or custom is universal at

the south. And I suppose it is thought necessary to enforce this habit of obsequious submission on the parts of the colored people to the whites, in order to maintain their supremacy over the poor, outraged slaves.

I will mention, in this connection, as illustrative of this cruel custom, an incident which I saw just before I ran away from my chains. A little colored boy was carrying along through Wilmington a basket of food. His name was Ben, and he belonged to Mrs. Runkin, a widow lady. A little mischievous white boy, just about Ben's age and size, met him, and purposely overturned the little fellow's basket, and scattered his load in the mud. Ben, in return for this wanton act called him some hard name, when the white boy clinched him to throw him down with the scattered fragments upon his basket in the mud. Ben resisted and threw down the white boy, proving to be the stronger of the two. Tom Myers, a young lawyer of Wilmington, saw the contest, and immediately rushing out, seized little Ben, and dragged him into the store opposite the place of battle. He sent out to a saddler's shop, procured a cow-hide, and gave the little fellow a tremendous flogging, for the daring crime of resisting a white boy who had wantonly invaded his rights. Is it any wonder that the spirit of self-respect of the poor, ignorant slave is broken down by such treatment of unsparing and persevering cruelty ?

I was now repulsed by James, so that I could hope for no assistance from him in learning to read. But I could not go on alone. I must get some one to aid me in starting, or give up the effort to learn. This I could not bear to do. I thought of a little boy, Hiram Bricket, ten years old, or about that age, who came along by the store one day, on his way home from school, while my master was gone home to dinner, and James was in the front part of the store. I beckoned to Hiram to come round to the back door ; and with him I made a bargain to meet me each day at noon, when I was allowed a little while to get my dinner, and to give me instruction in reading. I was to give him six cents a week. I met him the next day at his father's stable, the place agreed upon for our daily meeting ; and, going into one of the stables, the noble little fellow gave me a thorough lesson in the alphabet. I learned it nearly all at that time, with what study I could give it by stealth during the day and night. And then again I felt lifted up and happy.

I was permitted to enjoy these advantages, however, but a short time. A black boy, belonging to Hiram's father, one day discovered our meeting and what we were doing. He told his master of it, and Hiram was at once forbidden this employment.

I had then got along so that I was reading and spelling in words of two syllables.

After I was deprived of my kind little teacher, I plodded on the best way I could by myself, and in this way I got into words of five syllables. I got some little time to study by daylight in the morning, before any of my master's family had risen. I got a moment's opportunity also at noon, and sometimes at night. During the day I was in the back store a good deal, and whenever I thought I could have a few minutes to myself, I would take my book and try to learn a little in reading and spelling. If I heard James, or master Jones, or any customer coming in, I would drop my book among the barrels, and pretended to be very busy shovelling the salt or doing some other work. Several times I came very near being detected. My master suspected something, because I was so still in the back room, and a number of times he came very slyly to see what I was about. But at such times I was always so fortunate as to hear his tread or to see his shadow on the wall in time to hide away my book.

When I had got along to words of five syllables, I went to see a free colored friend, Ned Cowen, whom I knew I could trust, and told him that I was trying to learn to read, and asked him to help me a little. He told me I had got along far enough to get another book, in which I could learn to write the letters, as well as to read. He told me where and how to procure this book. I followed his directions, and obtained another spelling-book at Worcester's store in Wilmington. Jacob showed me a little about writing. He set me a copy, first of straight marks. I now got me a box, which I could hide under my bed, some ink, pens, and a bit of candle. So, when I went to bed, I pulled my box out from under my cot, turned it up on end, and began my first attempt at writing. I worked away till my candle was burned out, and then lay down to sleep. Jacob next set me a copy, which he called pot-hooks; then, the letters of the alphabet. These letters were also in my new spelling-book, and according to Jacob's directions, I set them before me for a copy, and wrote on these exercises till I could form all the letters and call them by name. One evening, I wrote out my name in large letters,—THOMAS JONES. This I carried to Jacob, in a great excitement of happiness, and he warmly commended me for my perseverance and dilligence.

About this time, I was at the store early one morning, and, thinking I was safe from all danger for a few minutes, had seated myself in the back store, on one of the barrels, to study in my precious spelling-book. While I was absorbed in this hap-

py enterprise, my master came in, much earlier than usual, and I did not hear him. He came directly into the back store. I saw his shadow on the wall, just in time to throw my book over in among the barrels, before he could see what it was, although he saw that I had thrown something quickly away. His suspicion was aroused. He said that I had been stealing something out of the store, and he fiercely ordered me to get what I threw away just as he was coming in at the door. Without a moment's hesitation, I determined to save my precious book and my future opportunities to learn out of it. I knew if my book was discovered, that all was lost, and I felt prepared for any hazard or suffering rather than give up my book and my hopes of improvement. So I replied at once to his question, that I had not thrown anything away; that I had not stolen anything from the store; that I did not have anything in my hands which I could throw away when he came in. My master declared, in a high passion, that I was lying, and ordered me to begin and roll away the barrels. This I did; but managed to keep the book slipping along so that he could not see it, as he stood in the door-way. He charged me again with stealing and throwing something away, and I again denied the charge. In a great rage, he then got down his long, heavy cow-hide, and ordered me to strip off my jacket and shirt, saying, with an oath, "I will make you tell me what it was you had when I came in." I stripped myself, and came forward, according to his directions, at the same time denying his charge with great earnestness of tone, and look, and manner. He cut me on my naked back, perhaps thirty times, with great severity, making the blood flow freely. He then stopped, and asked me what I had thrown away as he came in. I answered again that I had thrown nothing away. He swore terribly; said he was certain I was lying, and declared that he would kill me, if I did not tell him the truth. He whipped me the second time with greater severity, and at greater length than before. He then repeated his question, and I answered again as before. I was determined to die, if I could possibly bear the pain, rather than give up my dear book. He whipped me the third time, with the same result as before, and then, seizing hold of my shoulders, turned me round, as though he would inflict on my quivering flesh still another scourging; but he saw the deep gashes he had already made, and the blood already flowing under his cruel infliction; and his stern purpose failed him. He said, "Why, Tom, I din't think I had cut you so bad," and, saying that, he stopped, and told me to put on my shirt again. I did as he bade me, although my coarse shirt touching my raw back put me to a cruel pain. He

then went out, and I got my book and hid it safely away before he came in again. When I went to the house, my wounds had dried, and I was in an agony of pain. My mistress told the servant girl, Rachel, to help me off with my shirt, and to wash my wounds for me, and to put on to them some sweet oil. The shirt was dried to my back, so that it could not be got off without tearing off some of the skin with it. The pain, upon doing this, was greater even than I had endured from my cruel whipping. After Rachel had got my shirt off, my mistress asked me what I had done for which my master had whipped me so severely. I told her he had accused me of stealing when I had not, and then had whipped me to make me own it.

While Rachel was putting on the sweet oil, my master came in, and I could hear mistress scolding him for giving me such an inhuman beating, when I had done nothing. He said in reply, that Tom was an obstinate liar, and that was the reason why he had whipped me.

But I got well of my mangled back, and my book was still left. This was my best, my constant friend. With great eagerness, I snatched every moment I could get, morning, noon, and night, for study. I had begun to read; and, Oh, how I loved to study, and to dwell on the thoughts which I gained from my reading. About this time, I read a piece in my book about God. It said that "God, who sees and knows all our thoughts, loves the good and makes them happy; while he is angry with the bad, and will punish them for all their sins." This made me feel very unhapdy, because I was sure that I was not good in the sight of God. I thought about this, and couldn't get it out of my mind a single hour. So I went to James Galley, a colored man, who exhorted the slaves sometimes on Sunday, and told him my trouble, asking, "what shall I do?" He told me about Jesus, and told me I must pray the Lord to forgive me and help me to be good and happy. So I went home, and went down cellar and prayed, but I found no relief, no comfort for my unhappy mind. I felt so bad, that I could not even study my book. My master saw that I looked very unhappy, and he asked me what ailed me. I did not dare now to tell a lie, for I wanted to be good, that I might be happy. So I told master just how it was with me; and then he swore terribly at me, and said he would whip me if I did not give over praying. He said there was no heaven and no hell, and that Christians were all hypocrites, and that there was nothing after this life, and that he would not permit me to go moping round, praying and going to the meetings. I told him I could not help praying; and then he cursed me in a great passion, and declared that he would

whip me if he knew of my going on any more in that foolish way. The next night I was to a meeting, which was led by Jack Cammon, a free colored man, and a class leader in the Methodist Church. I was so much overcome by my feelings, that I staid very late. They prayed for me, but I did not yet find any relief; I was still very unhappy. The next morning, my master came in, and asked me if I went the night before to the meeting. I told him the truth. He said, "didn't I tell you I would whip you if you went nigh these meetings, and didn't I tell you to stop this foolish praying." I told him he did, and if he would, why, he might whip me, but still I could not stop praying, because I wanted to be good, that I might be happy and go to heaven. This reply made my master very angry. With many bitter oaths, he said he had promised me a whipping, and now he should be as good as his word. And so he was. He whipped me, and then forbade, with bitter threatenings, my praying any more, and especially my going again to meeting. This was Friday morning. I continued to pray for comfort and peace. The next Sunday I went to meeting. The minister preached a sermon on being born again, from the words of Jesus to Nicodemus. All this only deepened my trouble of mind. I returned home very unhappy. Collins, a free man of color, was at the meeting, and told my master that I was there. So, on Monday morning my master whipped me again, and once more forbade my going to meetings and praying. The next Sunday there was a class meeting, led by Binney Pennison, a colored free man. I asked my master, towards night, if I might go out. I told him I did not feel well. I wanted to go to the class meeting. Without asking me where I was going, he said I might go. I went to the class. I staid very late, and was so overcome by my feelings, that I could not go home that night. So they carried me to Joseph Jones's cabin, a slave of Mr. Jones. Joseph talked and, prayed with me nearly all night. In the morning I went home as soon as it was light, and, for fear of master, I asked Nancy, one of the slaves, to go up into mistress's room and get the store key for me, that I might go and open the store. My master told her to go back and tell me to come up. I obeyed with many fears. My master asked me where I had been the night before. I told him the whole truth. He cursed me again, and said he should whip me for my obstinate disobedience; and he declared that he would kill me if I did not promise to obey him. He refused to listen to my mistress, who was a professor, and who tried to intercede for me. And, just as soon as he had finished threatening me with what he would do, he ordered me to take the key and go and open

the store. When he came into the store that morning, two of his neighbors, Julius Dumbiven, and MacCauslin, came in too. He called me up, and asked me again where I staid last night. I told him with his boy, Joseph. He said he knew that was a lie; and he immediately sent off for Joseph to confirm his suspicions. He ordered me to strip off my clothes, and, as I did so, he took down the cow-hide heavy and stiff with blood which he had before drawn from my body with that cruel weapon, and which was congealed upon it. Dumbiven professed to be a Christian, and he now came forward and earnestly interceded for me, but to no purpose, and then he left. McCauslin asked my master, if he did not know, that a slave was worth more money after he became pious than he was before. And why then, he said, should you forbid Tom going to meetings and praying? He replied, that religion was all a damned mockery, and he was not going to have any of his slaves praying and whining round about their souls. McCauslin then left. Joseph came and told the same story about the night before that I had done, and then began to beg master not to whip me. He cursed him and drove him off. He then whipped me with great severity, inflicting terrible pain at every blow upon my quivering body, which was still very tender from recent lacerations. My suffering was so great, that it seemed to me that I should die. He paused at length, and asked me would I mind him and stop praying. I told him I could not promise him not to pray any more, for I felt that I must and should pray as long as I lived. "Well, then, Tom," he said, "I swear that I will whip you to death." I told him I could not help myself, if he was determined to kill me, but that I must pray while I lived. He then began to whip me the second time, but soon stopped, threw down the bloody cow-hide, and told me to go wash myself in the river, just back of the store, and then dress myself, and if I was determined to be a fool, why I must be one. My mistress now interceded earnestly for me with my cruel master. The next Sabbath was love feast, and I felt very anxious to join in that feast. This I could not do without a paper from my master, and so I asked mistress to help me. She advised me to be patient, and said she would help me all she could. Master refused to give any paper, and so I could not join the loving feast the next day.

On the next Friday evening, I went to the prayer meeting. Jack Cammon was there, and opened the meeting with prayer. Then Binney Pennison gave out the sweet hymn, which begins in these words:

"Come ye sinners poor and needy,
Weak and wounded, sick and sore."

I felt that it all applied most swettly to my condition, and I said in my heart, I will come now to Jesus, and trust in him. So when those who felt anxious were requested to come forward and kneel within the altar for prayer, I came and knelt down. While Jacob Cammon was praying for me, and for those who knelt by my side, my burden of sorrow, which had so long weighed me down, was removed. I felt the glory of God's love warming my heart, and making me very happy, I shouted aloud for joy, and tried to tell all my poor slave brothers and sisters, who were in the house, what a dear Saviour I had found, and how happy I felt in his precious love. Binney Pennison asked me if I could forgive my master. I told him I could, and did, and that I could pray God to forgive him, too, and make him a good man. He asked me if I could tell my master of the change in my feelings. I told him I should tell him in the morning. "And what," he asked, "will you do if he whips you still for praying and going to meeting?" I said I will ask Jesus to help me bear the pain, and to forgive my master for being so wicked. He then said, "Well, then, Brother Jones, I believe that you are a Christian."

A good many of us went from the meeting to a brother's cabin, where we began to express our joy in happy songs. The palace of General Dudley was only a little way off, and he soon sent over a slave with orders to stop our noise, or he would send the patrolers upon us. We then stopped our singing, and spent the remainder of the night in talking, rejoicing, and praying. It was a night of very great happiness to me. The contrast between my feelings then, and for many weeks previous, was very great. Now all was bright and joyous in my relations towards my precious Saviour. I felt certain that Jesus was my Saviour, and in this blessed assurance, a flood of glory and joy filled my happy soul. But this sweet night passed away, and, as the morning came, I felt that I must go home, and bear the slave's heavy cross. I went and told my mistress the blessed change in my feelings. She promised me what aid she could give with my master, and enjoined upon me to be patient and very faithful to his interest, and, in this way, I should at length wear out his opposiition to my praying and going to meeting.

I went down to the store in a very happy state of mind. I told James my feelings. He called me a fool, and said master would be sure to whip me. I told him I hoped I should be able to bear it, and to forgive master for his cruelty to me Master came down, talked with me a while, and told me that he should whip me because I had disobeyed him in staying out all night. He had told me he should whip me if ever I did so, and he

should make every promise good. So I began to take off my clothes. He called me a crazy fool, and told me to keep my clothes on, till he told me to take them off. He whipped me over my jacket; but I enjoyed so much peace of mind, that I scarcely felt the cow-hide. This was the last whipping that Mr. Jones inflicted upon me.

I was then nearly eighteen years old. I waited and begged for a paper to join the Church six months before I could get it. But all this time I was cheerful, as far as a slave can be, and very earnest to do all I could for my master and mistress. I was resolved to convince them that I was happier and better for being a Christian, and my master at last acknowledged that he could not find any fault with my conduct, and that it was impossible to find a more faithful slave than I was to him. And so, at last he gave a paper to Ben English, the leader of the colored members, and I joined the love feast, and was taken into the Church on trial for six months. I was put into Billy Cochran's class. At the expiration of six months, I was received into the Church in full fellowship, Quaker Davis' class. I remained there three years. My master was much kinder after this time than he had formerly been, and I was allowed some more time to myself than I had been before. I pursued my studies as far as I could, but I soon found the utter impossibility of carrying on my studies as I wished to do. I was a slave, and all avenues to real improvement I found guarded with jealous care and cruel tenacity against the despised and desolate bondman.

I still felt a longing desire to improve, to be free, but the conviction was getting hold of my soul, that I was only struggling in vain, when seeking to elevate myself into a manly and happy position. And now my mind was fast sinking into despair. I could read and write, and often enjoyed much happiness in poring over the very few books I could obtain; and especially, at times, I found great peace in reading my old, worn Testament. But I wanted now that hope which had filled my mind with such joy when I first began to learn to read. I found much happiness in prayer. But here, also, my mind labored in sadness and darkness much of the time.

About this time, my master was taken sick. On Sunday, he was prostrated by mortal pains and on Friday the same week, he died. He left fifteen slaves. I was purchased by Owen Holmes for $435,00. I was then in my twenty-third year. I had just passed through the darkest season of despairing agony that I had yet known. This came upon me in consequence of the visit, which I have already described, to my dear old desolate home. About this time, too, I entered into a new and dis-

tinct period of life, which I will unfold in another chapter. I will close this period of sorrow and shame with a few lines of touching interest to my mind:

Who shall avenge the slave? I stood and cried;
The earth, the earth, the echoing sea replied.
I turned me to the ocean, but each wave
Declined to be the avenger of the slave.
Who *shall* avenge the slave? my species cried;
The winds, the flood, the lightning of the sky.
I turned to these, from them one echo ran,
The *right* avenger of the slave is man.
Man was my fellow; in *his* sight I stood,
Wept and besought him by the voice of blood.
Sternly he looked, as proud on earth he trod,
Then said, the avenger of the slave is GOD.
I looked in prayer towards Heaven, a while 'twas still,
And then, methought, God's voice replied, I WILL.

CHAPTER SECOND.

I enter now upon a new development of wrongs and woes which I, as slave, was called to undergo. I must go back some two or three years from the time when my master died, and I was sold to Owen Holmes. The bitterness of persecution which master Jones had kept up against me so long, because I would try to serve the Lord, had passed away. I was permitted to pray and to go to our meetings without molestation. My master laid aside his terrible severity towards me. By his treatment of me, afterwards, he *seemed* to feel that he had done me wrong in scourging me as he had done, because I could not obey his wicked command, to stop praying, and to keep a way from the meetings. For, after the time of my joining the Church, he allowed me to go to all the meetings, and granted to me many other little favors, which I had never before received from him. About this time, I began to feel very lonely. I wanted a friend to whom I could tell my story of sorrows, of unsatisfied longing, of new and fondly cherished plans. I wanted a companion whom I could love with all my warm affections, who should love me in return with a true and fervent heart, of whom I might think when toiling for a selfish, unfeeling master; who should dwell fondly on my memory when we were separated during the severe labors of the day, and with whom I might enjoy the blessed happiness of social endearments after the work of each day was over. My heart yearned to have a home, if it was only

the wretched home of the unprotected slave, to have a wife to love me and to love. It seems to me that no one can have such fondness of love, and such intensity of desire for *home* and home affections, as the poor slave. Despised and trampled upon by a cruel race of unfeeling men, the bondman must die in the prime of his wretched life, if he finds no refuge in a dear home, where love and sympathy shall meet him from hearts made sacred to him by his own irrepressible affection and tenderness for them. And so I sought to love and to win a true heart in return. I did this, too, with a full knowledge of thy desperate agony that the slave husband and father is exposed to. Had I not seen this in the anguish of my own parents? Yea, I saw it in every public auction, where men and women and children were brought upon the block, examined, and bought. I saw it on such occasions, in the hopeless agony depicted on the countenance of husband and wife, there separated to meet no more in this cruel world; and in the screams of wild despair and useless entreaty which the mother, then deprived of her darling child, sent forth. I heard the doom which stares every slave parent in the face each waking and sleeping hour of an unhappy life. And yet I sought to become a husband and a father, because I felt that I could live no longer unloved and unloving. I was married to Lucilla Smith, the slave of Mrs. Moore. *We called* it and *we considered* it a *true marriage*, although we knew well that marriage was not permitted to the slaves, as a sacred right of the loving heart. Lucilla was seventeen years old when we we were married. I loved her with all my heart, and she gave me a return for my affections, with which I was contented. Oh, God of Love, thou knowest what happy hours we have passed in each other's society in our poor cabin. When we knelt in prayer, we never forgot to ask God to save us from the misery of cruel separation, while life and love were our portion. Oh, how we have talked of this dreaded fate, and wept in mingling sorrow, as we thought of our desolation, if we should be parted and doomed to live on weary years away from each other's dear presence. We had three dear little babes. Our fondness for our precious children increased the current feeling of love for each other, which filled our hearts. They were bright, precious things, those little babes; at least, so they seemed to us. Lucilla and I were never tired of planning to improve their condition, as far as might be done for slaves. We prayed with new fervency to our Father in heaven to protect our precious babes. Lucilla was very proud of me, because I could read and write, and she often spoke of my teaching our dear little ones, and then she would say, with tears, "Who knows, Thomas, but *they*

may yet be *free and happy?*" Lucilla was a valuable slave to her mistress. She was a seamstress, and very expert at her needle. I had a constant dread that Mrs. Moore, her mistress, would be in want of money, and sell my dear wife. We constantly dreaded a final separation. Our affections for each other was very strong, and this made us always apprehensive of a cruel parting. These fears were well founded, as our sorrowing hearts too soon learned. A few years of very pure and constant happiness, for slaves, passed away, and we were parted to meet but once again till we met in Eternity. Mrs. Moore left Wilmington, and moved to Newburn. She carried with her my beloved Lucilla, and my three children, Annie, four years old; Lizzie, two and a half years; and our sweet little babe Charlie. She remained there eighteen months. And, Oh, how lonely and dreary and desponding were those months of lonely life to my crushed heart! My dear wife and my precious children were seventy-four miles distant from me, carried away from me in utter scorn of my beseeching words. I was tempted to put an end to my wretched life. I thought of my dear family by day and by night. A deep despair was in my heart, such as no one is called to bear in such cruel, crushing power, as the poor slave, severed forever from the objects of his love, by the rapacity of his brother. But that dark time of despair passed away, and I saw once more my wife and children. Mrs. Moore left Newburn for Tuscaloosa, Ala., and, passing through Wilmington, on her journey, she spent one night in her old home. That night I passed with my wife and children. Lucilla had pined away under the agony of our separation, even more than I had done. That night she wept on my bosom, and we mingled bitter tears together. Our dear children were baptized in the tears of agony that were wrung from our breaking hearts. May a just God remember that night in the last award that we and our oppressors are to receive!

The next morning Mrs. Moore embarked on board the packet. I followed my wife and childen to the boat, and parted from them without a word of farewell. Our sobs and tears were our only adieu. Our hearts were too full of anguish for any other expression of our hopeless woe. I have never seen that dear family since, nor have I heard from them since I parted from them there. God only knows the bitterness of my agony, experienced in the separation of my wife and children from me. The memory of that great woe will find a fresh impression on my heart while that heart shall beat. How will the gifted and the great meet the charge against them at the great day, as the Judge shall say to them, in stern displeasure, "I was

sick, destitute, imprisoned, helpless, and ye ministered not unto me, for when ye slighted and despised these wretched, pleading, slaves, ye did these acts of scorn against me. Depart ye workers of iniquity."

After my purchase by Owen Holmes, I hired my time at $150, per year, paid monthly. I rented a house of Dr. E. J. Derset. I worked, loading and unloading vessels that came into Wilmington, and could earn from one dollar to a dollar and a quarter a day. While my wife and family were spared to bless my home by their presence and love, I was comparatively happy. But I found then that the agony of the terrible thought, "I am a slave, my wife is a slave, my precious children are slaves," grew bitter and unsupportable, just as the happiness in the society of my beloved home became more distinct and abounding. And this one cup of bitterness was ever at my lips. Hearts of kind sympathy tender pity, did I not drain that cup of bitter woe to its very dregs, when my family were carried off into returnless exile, and I was left a heartbroken lonely man? Can you still be inactive while thousands are drinking that portion of despair every year in this land of schools and Bibles? After I parted from my family, I continued to toil on, but not as I had done before. No home was darker than the holds of ships in which I worked. Its light, the bright joyous light of love and sympathy and mutual endearments was quenched. Ah me, how dark it left my poor heart! It was colder than the winter wind and frost; the warm sunshine was snatched away, and my poor heart froze in its bitter cold. Its gloom was deeper than prison or cave could make it. Was not there the *deserted* chairs and beds, once occupied by the objects of a husband's and a father's deep love? Deserted! How, and why? The answer, is it not the unqualified condemnation of the government and religion of this land; I could not go into my cold, dark, cheerless house; the sight of its deserted rooms was despair to my soul. So I worked on, taking jobs whenever I could get them, and worked often till nearly morning, and never going to my home for rest till I could toil no more. And so I passed four years, and I began to feel that I could not live in utter loneliness any longer. My heart was still and always yearning for affection and sympathy and loving communion. My wife was torn from me. I had ceased to hope for another meeting with her in this world of oppression and suffering; so I sat down and wrote to Lucilla, that I could live alone no longer, and saying to her the sad farewell, which we could not say when we were sundered. I asked Mary R. Moore to come and cheer me in my desolate home. She became my wife, and, thank God, she

has been rescued from slavery by the blessing of God and my efforts to save her. She is now my wife, and she is with me to-day, and till death parts us, secure from the iron hand of slavery. Three of our dear children are with us, too, in the old Commonwealth. I cannot say they are in a *free* land; for, even here, in the city of Boston, where, I am told, is kept the old cradle of liberty, *my* precious children are excluded from the public schools, because their skin is black. Still, Boston is better than Wilmington, inasmuch as the rulers of this place permit me to send my children to any school at all. After my second marriage, I hired my wife of her master, and paid for her time $48,00 a year, for three years. We had one child while Mary was a slave. That child is still in chains. The fourth year, by the aid of a white friend, I purchased my wife for $350,00. We had before determined to try to accomplish this enterprise, in order that our dear babes might be free. Besides, I felt that I could not bear another cruel separation from wife and children. Yet, the dread of it was strong and unceasing upon my mind. So we made a box, and, through a hole in the top, we put in every piece of money, from five cents up to a dollar, that we could save from our hard earnings. This object nerved us for unceasing toil, for twenty months, or about that time. What hopes and fears beset us as those months wore away. I have been compelled to hide that box in a hole, dug for it, when I knew the patrollers were coming to search my cabin. For well do I know, if they found my box, I should be penniless again. How often have I started and turned in sudden and terrible alarm, as I have dropped a piece of money into my box, and heard its loud ring upon the coin below, lest some prowling enemy should hear it, and steal from me my boarded treasure. And how often have I started up in my sleep, as the storm has beat aloud upon my humble home, with the cry of unspeakable agony in my heart, — "Then, O God, they have taken my box, and my wife and babes are still slaves." When my box was broken open, I still lacked a little of the $350,00 necessary to buy my wife. The kind friend, who had promised to aid me in my contemplated purchase, made up the deficiency, and I became the owner of my wife. We had three children at this time, and O, how my crushed heart was uplifted in its pride and joy, as I took them in my arms and thought that they were not slaves.

After I had purchased my wife, we still worked hard, and saved our earnings with great care, in order to get some property in hand for future use. As I saved my earnings, I got a white man whom I thought my friend, (his name I choose to keep for the present,) to lay it out for me. In this way I became the

owner of the cabin in which I lived, and two other small houses, all of which were held in the name of this supposed friend. He held them in his own name for me. A slave cannot hold property. I will here remark, that I was deceived by this man; and, when I ran away from my chains, after sending on my family, I was compelled to sacrifice the whole of this property. I left it, because I could not get my own, in his hands, and come off entirely destitute. Thank God, I got a way, and now I have no tears to shed over the loss of my houses.

During the winter of 1848—9, a kind lady came and told me that some white men were plotting to enslave my wife and children again. She advised me to get them off to the free States as quickly and secretly as possible. A lawyer of Wilmington told me they were not safe, unless emancipated by a special act of the Legislature. He was a member of the House, and tried to get through the House a bill for their emancipation. But there was so much ill feeling upon this question, that he could not do it. The Legislature threw it aside at once. He then advised me to get them off to the free States as my only course to save them. This I determined to do, if possible. I kept a good look out for a vessel. I found one, and made a bargain with the captain to take on board for New York, a free colored woman and her three children. A kind friend gave me a certificate of their freedom to the captain, and I brought my wife and children on board at night, paid the captain $25,00 for their fare, and staid on the wharf, in torturing fear, till about sunrise, when I saw the vessel under way. It was soon out of sight. When I went home, I threw myself on my knees, and poured out my soul to God, to carry that ship and its precious cargo safely and swiftly on to a free haven, and to guard and guide me soon to a free home with my beloved family. And so I kept on, praying, working, hoping, pining, for neartly three weeks, when I received the happy news that my dear ones were safe with a true-hearted friend in Brooklyn. I had notified him, before hand, that they were coming; and now the good and glorious news came that they were safe with Robert H. Cousins, where the slaveholder could trouble them no more. I had arranged with Mary, when she left, to come on myself, as soon as I could get the money for my houses and land. She was to write to me as though she had gone to New York on a visit, intending to come back, and she was to speak of New York as if she did not like it at all. I knew my master would be very angry, when he heard she had gone, unbeknown, to him; and thought he would demand to see the letters my wife if she should get friends in New York to write to me for her; and so

I made ready to meet and quiet his suspicious, while I was plotting my own escape. For more than three months I tried to get the money, or part of it, for my houses; but was put off and deceived, till I found I must come off without a cent of the property I had tried so hard to accumulate. I was required to call and see my master every day, because he suspected me of a design to run away. He was taken suddenly sick, and I then started for my wife and children to whom I arrived shortly afterwards.

WILD TOM,

OF THE ISLAND RETREAT.

INTRODUCTION.

[Wild Tom, the hero of our story, was of unmixed African blood, and the slave of Gen. Carter. He possessed an excellent character for integrity and capability — was a devoted and faithful convert to the Methodist persuasion; but the suffering he endured, through the tyrannical practices of slavery, served to harden his heart, and eventually to extinguish the light of religion in his soul.

Ann, the wife of Thomas, was a pretty, sprightly, good-natured girl, whom he loved exceedingly. She was whipped to death by Martin, an overseer on Gen. Carter's plantation.

Archy Moore, was son of Mr. Moore, his master, by a Slave mother. He was nearly white in his complexion, but yet a crushed Slave.]

CHAPTER FIRST.

Since the death of his wife, a remarkable change had taken place in my friend Thomas. He had lost his former air of contentment and good nature, and had grown morose and sullen. Instead of being the most willing and industrious laborer in the field, as he used to be, he seemed to have imbibed a strong distaste for work, and he slighted and neglected his task as much as possible. Had he been under any other driver than myself, his idleness and neglect would have frequently brought him into trouble. But I loved and pitied him; and I screened him all I could.

The wrongs and injuries that had been inflicted upon him since his arrival at Locsahachee, seemed to have subverted all

the principles upon which he had so long acted. It was a subject on which he did not seem inclined to converse, and upon which I was unwilling to press him; but I had abundent reason to suspect that he had totally renounced the religion in which he had been so carefully instructed; and which, for so long a time, had excercised so powerful an influence over him. He had secretly returned to the practice of certain wild rites, which in his early youth, he had learned from his mother, who had herself been kidnapped from the coast of Africa, and who had been, as he had often told me, zealously devoted to her country's superstitions. He would sometimes talk wildly and incoherently about having seen the spirit of his departed wife, and of some promise he had made to the apparition; and I was led to believe that he suffered under occasional fits of partial insanity.

At all events, he was in most respects, an altered man. He had ceased to be the humble and obedient slave, contented with his lot, and zealously devoted to his master's service. Instead of promoting his master's interest, it seemed now to be his study and his aim to do as much mischief as possible. There were two or three artful, daring, unquiet spirits on the plantation, from whom till lately, he had kept aloof, but whose acquaintance he now sought, and whose confidence he soon obtained. They found him bold and prudent, and what was more, trusty and magnanimous; and they soon gave place to his superiority of intellect, and acknowledged him as their leader. They were joined by some others, whose only motives was the desire of plunder, and they extended their depredations to every part of the plantation.

In this new character, Thomas still gave evidence that he was no ordinary man. He conducted his enterprises with singular address, and when all other stratagems by which to save his companions from detection proved unavailing, he had still one resourse that showed the native nobleness of his soul. Such was the steady firmness of his mind, and the masculine vigor of his constitution, that he was enabled to do what few men could. He could brave even the torture of the lash — a torture, I have said already, not less terrible than that of the rack itself. When every other resourse failed him, he was ready to shield his companions by a voluntary confession; and to concentrate upon himself a punishment, which he knew that some among them were too feeble and faint-hearted to endure. Magnanimity such as this, is esteemed even in a freeman the highest pitch of virtue, — how then shall we sufficiently admire it in a slave?

Thank God, tyranny is not omnipotent!

Though it crush its victims to the earth; and tread them into the dust; and brutify them by every possible invention; it can-

not totally extinguish the spirit of manhood within them. Here it glimmers; and there it secretly burns; sooner or later, to burst forth in a flame, that will not be quenched, and cannot be kept under!

So long as I was in the confidence of Mr. Martin, I was able to render Thomas essential service, by informing him of the suspicions, plans, and stratagems of the overseer. It was not long however, before I forfeited that confidence; not because Mr. Martin entertained any suspicion of my playing him false, — for it was very easy to throw dust in the eyes of so stupid a fellow, — but because I did not come up to his notions of the spirit and the duty of a driver. The season was sickly; and as the hands who composed my gang were from a more northern climate, and not yet seasoned to the pestiferous atmosphere of a rice plantation, they suffered a good deal from sickness, and several of them were often unable to work. I had explained to Mr. Martin, and he seemed to be satisfied with my explanation; but riding into the field one day, in a particularly bad humor, and I believe, little excited with liquor, he got into a towering rage at finding not half my gang in the field, and more than half the tasks untouched.

He demanded the reason.

I told him that the hands were sick.

He swore they had no businsss to be sick; he was tired, he said, of this talk about sickness; he knew very well it was all sham; and he was determined to be imposed upon no longer. "If any more complaints are made of sickness, Archy, you have nothing to do but whip the scoundrels and set them to work."

"What," said I, "if they are really sick?"

"Sick or not sick, I tell you. If they are not sick a whipping is no more than they deserve; and if they are, why nothing is so likely to do them good as a little bloodletting."

"In that case," said I, "you had better appoint another driver; I should make but a poor hand at whipping sick people."

"Hold your tongue, you damned insolent blackguard. Who gave you leave to advise me, or dispute my orders? Hand me your whip, you rascal."

I did so; and Mr. Martin thereupon administered upon me a fresh infliction of that same discipline he had bestowed when he first put the whip into my hand. So ended my drivership; and though I now lost my double allowance, and was obliged to turn into the field again, and perform my task like the other hands, I cannot say that I much regretted it. It was a pitiful and sorry office, which no one but a scoundrel ever ought to undertake.

I now united myself more closely to the party of Thomas,

and joined heart and hand in all their enterprises. Our depredations became at last so considerable, that Mr. Martin was obliged to establish a regular watch, consisting of his drivers and a few of their subordinates, who kept prowling about the plantation all night, and made it unsafe to venture into the fields. This arrangement was hastened by a circumstance that happened upon that plantation, about which a very strict inquiry was instituted, but which led to no definate result. On one and the same night, General Carter's splendid plantation-seat, and his extensive rice mills were discovered to be on fire, and notwithstanding all efforts to save them, both were totally consumed. Several of the slaves, and Thomas among the rest, were put to a sort of torture to make them acknowledge some participation inthis house-burning. That cruelty availed nothing. They all stoutly denied knowing any thing about it. I was, as I have said, very much in Thomas's confidence; yet he never spoke to me about that fire. As he was one of those men who know how to keep their own secrets, I always suspected that he knew much more about the matter than he choose to divulge.

At all events, it was evidently a much more potent feeling than the mere love of plunder by which Thomas was actuated. Since his wife's death, he sometimes drank to excess; but this was seldom, and there never was a man more temperate in his meats and drinks, or less fastiduous than Thomas generally was. He had formerly dressed with much neatness; now he neglected his dress altogether. He did not love society; he had little intercourse with any body except with me; and it was not always that he seemed to wish even for my company. Thomas had little use for his share of the plunder, and in fact, he generally distributed it among his companions.

When the thing was first proposed, he seemed to have little inclination to extend our depredations beyond the limits of Loosahachee. But as it was no longer safe to continue them there; and his companions had rioted too long in plunder to be willing to relinquish it, Thomas yielded at last to their urgent solicitations, and led us, night after night, to the neighboring plantations. We soon pushed our proceedings so far, as to attract the notice of the overseer, whose domains we had invaded. At first, they supposed that the thieves were to be looked for at home, and numberless were the severities they exercised upon those whom they suspected. But in spite of all their cruelties, the depredations were still continned and such was the singular art and cunning which Thomas displayed, in varying the scene and manner of our visits, that for a long time, we escaped all the traps and ambushes that were planned against us.

We were one night. in a rice field, and had almost filled our bags, when the watchful ear of Thomas detected a sound, as if of some one cautiously approaching. He supposed it might be the patrol, which, of late, instead of whiling away their time by the help of a fiddle and a bottle, of whishey, had grown more active, and actually performed some of the duties of a night watch. Under this impression, he gave a signal for us to steal off quietly, in a certain order which he had arranged before hand. The field was bordered on one side, by a deep and wide river, from which it was protected by a high embankment. We had come by water; and our canoe lay in the river, under the shade of a clump of bushes and small trees which grew upon the dike. One by one, we cautionsly stole over the bank, carefully keeping in the shade of the bushes, and all but Thomas were already in the boat. We were waiting for our leader, who as usual, was the last man in the retreat, when we heard several shouts and cries, which seemed to indicate that he was discovered, if not taken. The sound of two musket shots fired in rapid succession, increased our terror. We hastily shoved the boat from the shore; and pushing her into the current, of the flood-tide, which was setting up the river, we were carried rapidly and silently out of sight of our landing place. The shouts were still continued, but they grew fainter and fainter, and seemed to take a direction from the river. We now put out our paddles and plying with all our strength, we pretty soon reached a small cove or creek, the place where we kept our boat, and at which we were accustomed to embark. We drew the canoe on shore, and carefully concealed it among the high grass. Then, without taking out our rice-bags, and leaving our shoes in the boat, we ran towards Loosahachee, which we reached withont any further adventure.

I was very anxious about Thomas, but I had scarcely thrown myself upon my bed, before I heard a light tap at the door of my cabin, which I know to be his. I sprang up and let him in. He was panting for breath and covered with mud. Thomas said, that just as he was going to climb the embankment, he looked behind him, and saw two men rapidly approaching. They seemed to observe him just at the same moment, and called to him to stop. If he had attempted to reach the boat, it would have drawn them that way, and perhaps led to the detection of the whole company. The moment they called to him, he dropped his riee-bag, and stooping as low as he could, he pushed rapidly through the rice in a direction from the river. His pursuers raised a loud shout, and fired their muskets at him, — but without effect. He jumped several cross ditches, made for

the high ground, at distance from the river, and drew off the patrol in that direction. They pursued him closely; but as he was very strong and active, and well acquainted with the place, he succeeded in escaping from among the ditches and embankments of the rice-field, gained the high grounds, and took a direction towards Loosahachee. But though he had distanced his pursuers, they had still kept upon his track, and he expected that they would follow him up, and would shortly be arriving.

While Thomas was telling his adventures, he had stripped off his wet clothes, and washed off the mud, with which he was covered. I furnished him with a dry suit, which he took with him to his own cabin which was close by mine. I hastened round to the cabins of our companions and told them what visitors to expect. The barking of all the plantation dogs pretty soon informed us that the patrol were coming. They had roused the overseer, and with torches in their hands, they entered and searched every cabin in the quarter. But we were prepared for their visit; we were roused with difficulty out of a deep sleep, and seemed to be very much astonished at this unseasonable disturbance.

The search proved to be a very useless one; but as the patrol were certain that they had traced the fugitive to Loosahachee, the overseer of the plantation upon which we had been depredating, came over the next morning to search out and punish the culprit. He was accompanied by several other men, who it seems were freeholders of the district, selected with such forms, or rather such neglect of all form, as the law of Carolina prescribe in such cases. Five Carolina freeholders, selected at hap-hazard, constitute such a court as in most other countries, would hardly be trusted with the final adjudication of any matter above the value of forty shillings at the amount.

A table was set out before the door of the overseer's house, some glasses and a bottle of whiskey were placed upon it, and the court proceeded to business. We were all brought up and examined, one after the other. The only witnesses were the patrol who had pursued Thomas; and they were ordered by the court to pick out the culprits. That was rather a difficult matter. There were between sixty and seventy men of us; the night had been cloudy and without a moon, and the patrol had only caught some hasty and uncertain glimpses of the person whom they had followed. The court seemed rather vexed at their hesitation. Yet, perhaps, it was not very unreasonable; since they were quite unable to agree together as to what sort of a man it was. One thought him short, the other was certain

that he was quite tall. The first, pronounced him a stout, well-set fellow, the other had taken him to be very slender.

By this time, the first bottle of whiskey was emptied, and a second was put on the table. The court now told the witnesses that it would not do, they did not come up to the mark at all, and if they went on at that rate, the fellow would escape altogether. Just at this moment, the overseer of the plantation which had been plundered, rode up, and as soon as he had dismounted, he stepped forward to the relief of the witnesses. He said, that while the court was organizing, he had taken the opportunity, to ride over and examine the rice-field, in which the rogue had been started up. It was much trampled in places, and there were a great many foot-prints; but they were all just alike, and seemed to have been made by the same person. He took a little stick from his pocket, on which, he said, he had carefully marked their exact length and breadth.

Now this was a trick for detecting people, which Thomas understood very well, and he had taken good care to be prepared for it. Our whole company were provided with shoes of the largest size we could get, and all exactly of the same pattern.

This speech of the overseer seemed to revive the drooping hopes of the judges; and they made us all sit down upon the ground and to have our feet measured. There was a man on the plantation named Billy, a harmless, stupid, fellow, wholly unconnected with us, but unluckily for him, the only one of all the slaves whose foot corresponded at all with the measure. The length of this poor fellow's foot was fatal to him. The judges shouted with one voice, and in the style of condemnation to be expected from such a court, that "they would be damned if he was not the thief." It was in vain that the poor fellow denied the charge and pleaded for mercy. His terror, confusion, and surprise, only served to confirm the opinion of his guilt, and the more he denied, and the louder he pleaded, the more positively his judges were determined against him. Without further ceremony they pronounced him guilty, and sentenced him to be hung.

The sentence was no sooner pronounced than preperations were made for its execution. An empty barrel was brought out, and placed under a tree that stood before the door. The poor fellow was mounted upon it; the halter was put about his neck, and fastened to a limb over his head. At first they could get no one willing to act as executioner, but after becoming so drunk that they had lost all sense of judical decorum or piety, one of them kicked, or was rather pushed against the barrel, and the poor victim of Carolina justice was launched into eternity

The execution over, the slaves were sent into the field; while Mr. Martin, with the judges and witnesses, and several others whom the fame of the trial had drawn to Loosahachee, commenced a regular drunken debauch, which they kept up all that day, and the night following.

CHAPTER SECOND.

The authority of masters over their slaves is in general a continual reign of terror. A base and dastard fear is the sole principle of human nature to which the slave-holder appeals. When it was determined to hang the poor fellow, whose fate I have described in the last chapter, his judges could not know, nor do I suppose, they much cared, whether he was innocent or guilty. Their great object was to terrify the survivors; and by an example of what they would denominate wholesome and necessary severity, to deter others from any further trespasses upon the neighboring plantations. In this they succeeded, for though Thomas endeavored to keep up our spirits, we were thoroughly scared, and felt but little inclination to second his boldness which seemed to grow more determined, the more obstacles encountered.

One of our confederates in particular, was so alarmed at the fate of poor Billy, that he seemed to have lost all self-control; and we were in constant fear lest he should betray us. When the first paroxysm of his terror was at its height, the evening after he had witnessed the execution, I believe he would gladly have confessed the whole, if he could have found a white man sober enough to listen to him. After a while, he grew more calm; but in the course of the day he had dropped some hints which were carefully treasured up by one of the drivers. He reported them, as I discovered, to the overseer; but Mr. Martin had not yet recovered from the effects of the frolic, and he was too drunk and stupid to understand a word that the driver said to him.

We had begun to get the better of our fears, when a new incident happened, which determined us to seek our safety in flight. Some persons, in passing along the river bank, had discovered our canoe, which in the hurry of our retreat, we had taken too little care to conceal. It contained not only our bags full of rice, — for we had not yet recovered courage enough to go after them, — but our shoes also, all exactly of the same size, and corresponding with the measure which had been produced upon the trial. Here was ample proof that quite a number had been engaged in the scene of depradation: and as one of the

company had been raced to Loosachachee, it would be reasonable to look for the others upon the same plantation. Luckily, I obtained an early intimation of this discovery, by means of one of the overseer's house-servants, with whom I had the policy to keep up a pretty intimate connection. A man had arrived at the overseer's house, his horse dripping with foam, and with an appearance of great haste and impatience, he had asked to see the overseer. The moment he came in, the stranger requesed to speak with him alone, and Mr. Martin took his guest into another room and locked the door. The girl, who was my spy and informant, under an appearance of the greatest simplicity, was artful and intelligent; and she was prompted to overhear this secret conversation, as much by her own curiosity, as by the suspicion that it might possibly be something, in which I would take an interest. She contrived to conceal herself in a closet, which was separated from the room in which the overseer and his visitor were conversing, only by a thin partition; and having overheard his story, the substance of which I have already mentioned, and learned besides, that the court would hold a new session at Loosahachee, the day following, she hastened to inform me of what she had heard. She knew nothing in particular, of our affairs, but she had reason to believe that this piece of news would not be entirely uninteresting to me.

I informed Thomas of what she had told me. We agreed at once, that our best chance of safety was in flight; and we immediately communicated our intention, and the cause of it, to the rest of our confederates. They were anxious to accompany us, and we all resolved to be off that very night.

As soon as evening came on, we stole away from the plantation and gained the woods in company. As we anticipated that a very diligent search would be made for us, we thought it best to separate. Thomas and myself resolved to keep together; the others scattered and took various directions. As long as the darkness lasted, we travelled on as rapidly as we could. When the morning began to appear, we plunged into a thick swampy piece of woods, and having broken down some branches and young trees, we made as dry a bed as we were able, and lay down to sleep. We were much fatigued with our long and rapid journey, and slept soundly. It was past noon when we waked. Our appetites were sharp, but we had no provisions. Just as we were beginning to consider what course it would be best to pursue, we heard the distant baying of a hound. Thomas listened for a moment, and then *ex*

claimed that he knew that cry. It was a famous dog, a cross of the blood-hound, which Mr. Martin had long had in training, and upon whose performances in tracking out runaways he very much prided himself. The place where we were, was a thick swamp, which it was difficult to move, and not easy to stand. To cross it would be impossible; and we resolved to get into the edge of it, where the ground was harder, and the undergrowth thinner, and to continue our flight. We did so; but the hound gained rapidly upon us, and his baying sounded louder and louder. Thomas drew a stout sharp knife which he carried in his pocket. We were now just at the border where the dry ground came down upon the swamp, and looking behind us, across the level and open woods, we could see the hound coming on with his nose to the ground, and uttering at intervals a deep and savage cry. Farther behind, but still in full view, we saw a man on horseback, whom we took to be Mr. Martin himself.

The dog was evidently upon our track and following it to the place where we had first plunged into the swamp, he disappeared from our view. But we could still hear his clamor, which grew louder and almost constant; and we soon perceived by the rustling and cracking of the underwood that he was close upon us. At this moment we faced about, and stood at bay;—Thomas in front, with his knife in hand, and I just behind, with a sharp and heavy lightwood knot, the best, indeed the only weapon, of which I could avail myself. Presently the dog emerged from the swamp. The moment he saw us, he redoubled his cry, and dashed forward foaming at Thomas's throat, but only succeeded in seizing his left arm, which Thomas raised as a shield against the dog's attack. At the same instant he dealt a stroke with his knife, which penetrated to the hilt, and dog and man came struggling to the ground.—How the contest would have ended had Thomas been alone, is very doubtful; for though the hound soon received several wounds, they only seemed to increase his ferocity, and he still struggled to get at the throat of his antagonist. My lightl wood knot now did good service. Two or three heavy blows upon the dog's head laid him senseless and sprawling on the ground.

While we had been awaiting the dog's attack, and during the contest, we had scarcely thought of his master; but looking up, after it was all over, we discovered that Mr. Martin was already very near us. When the dog took to the swamp, his master had followed along upon the edge, and came sud-

denly u on us before we had expected him. He pointed his gun and called upon us to surrender. Thomas no sooner saw the overseer, than he seemed to lose all his self control, and grasping his knife, he rushed upon him. Mr. Martin fired, but the buck-shot rattled harmlessly among the trees, and as he was attempting to wheel his horse, Thomas dashed upon him, seized him by the arm and dragged him to the ground. The horse ran frightened through the woods; and it was in vain that I attempted to stop him. We looked round in expectation of seeing some others of the huntsmen coming up. None were in sight; and we seized the opportunity to retreat and to carry our prisoner into the covert of the swamp.

We learned from him that by the time the court and their attendants arrived at Loosahachee, our flight had been discovered, and that it was immediately resolved to raise the neighborhood, and to commence a general search for the runaways. All the horses, dogs and men that could be come at, were put in requisition. They were divided into parties, and immediately commenced beating through the woods and swamps in the neighborhood.

A party of five or six men, with Mr Martin and his bloodhound, had traced three of our companions into a thick swamp, just on the bank of a river. The pursuers dismounted, and with their guns in their hands, they followed the dog into the thicket. Our poor fellows was so overcome with fatigue, that they slept until the very moment that the hound sprang in upon them. He seized one of them by the throat, and held him to the ground. The others ran; and as they ran, the pursuers fired. One of the fugitives fell dead, horribly mangled and cut to pieces with buck-shot; the other still continued his flight. As soon as the dog could be compelled to quit his hold of the man he had seized,—which was not without difficulty and delay,—he was put upon the track of the surviving fugitive. He followed it to the river, where he stood at fault — The man had probably plunged in, and swam to the other side; but as the dog could not be made to take the water, and as the swamp on the opposite bank was reputed to be very soft and dangerous, no further pursuit was made; the chase in that direction was given up, and the poor fellow was suffered to escape for the present.

The pursuers now separated. Two of them undertook to carry back to Loosahachee the captive they had taken, and the other three, with Mr. Martin and his hound, were to continue the hunt in search of the rest of us They learned from their

captive the place at which we had parted company, and the direction which the several parties had taken. After beating about for some time, the hound struck upon our trail, and opened in full cry; but the horses of Mr. Martin's companions were so broken down, that when he began to spur on, to keep up with the hound, he soon left them behind. Mr. Martin ended his story by advising us to go in and surrender ourselves; giving us his word and honor for it as a gentleman and an overseer, that if we would offer him no further violence or injury he would protect us from punishment, and reward us most handsomely.

The sun was now setting. The short twilight which follows a Carolina sunset would soon be succeeded by the darkness of a cloudy and moonless night; and we felt but little apprehension of being immediately troubled by our pursuers. I looked at Thomas, as if to inquire what we had better do.—He drew me aside,—having first examined the fastenings of our prisoner, whom we had bound to a tree, by some cords found in his own pocket, and which were doubtless intended for a very different purpose.

Thomas paused for a moment, as if to collect his thoughts; then pointing to Mr. Martin, "Archy," he said, "that man dies to-night."

There was a wild energy, and at the same time, a steady coolness, in the tone in which he spoke. It started me; at first I made no answer; and as meanwhile I looked Thomas in the face, I saw there an expression of stern exultation, and a fixedness of purpose not to be shaken. His eyes flashed fire, as he repeated, but in a low and quiet tone that contrasted strangely with the matter of his speech, "I tell you, Archy, that man dies to-night. She commands it; I have promised it; and nowthe time is come."

Who commands it?" I hastily inquired.

"Do you ask who? Archy, that man was the murderer of my wife."

Though Thomas and I had lived in great intimacy, that was almost the first time, since the death of his wife, that he had mentioned her to me in such plain terms. He had, it is true, now and then made some distant allusions to her; and I recollected that on several occasions before, he had dropped some strange and incoherent hints about an intercourse which he still kept up with her.

The mention of his wife, brought tears into his eyes;—but with his hand, he wiped them hastily away and soon recover-

ing his former air of calm and steady determination, he again repeated, in the same low but resolute tone, "Archy, I tell you that man dies to-night."

When I called to mind all the circumstances that had attended the death of Thomas's wife, I could not but acknowledge that Mr. Martin had been her murderer. I had sympathized with Tnomas then, and I sympathized with him now. The murderer was in his power; he believed himself called upon to execute justice upon him, and I could not but acknowledge that his death would be an act of righteous retribution.

Still, I felt a sort of instinctive horror at the idea of shedning blood; and perhaps too, there still crept about my heart some remains of that slavish fear, and servile timidity, which the bolder spirit of Thomas had wholly shaken off. I acknowledged that the life of the overseer was justly forfeited; but at the same time, I reminded Thomas that Mr. Martin had promised, it we would carry him home in safety, to procure our pardon and protect us from punishment.

A scornful smile played about the lip of my comrade while I was speaking. "Yes, Archy," he answered, "pardon and protection—and a hundred lashes, and a hanging the next day, perhaps. No! boy, I want no such pardon; I want no pardon sach as they will give. I have been a slave too long already. I am now free; and when they take me they are welcomed to take my life. Besides, we cannot trust him;—if we wished it, we cannot trust him. You know we cannot. They do not think themselves obliged to keep any promises they make us. They willl promise anything to get us in their power; and then their promises are worthless as rotten straw. My promises are not like theirs; and have I not told you that I have promised it? Yes, I have sworn it; and I now say, once for all, that man must die to-night."

There was a strength and a determination, in his tone and manner, which overpowered me. I could resist it no longer, and I bade him do his pleasure. He loaded the gun, which he had taken from Mr. Martin, and which he had held in his hand all the time we had been talking. This done we returned to the overseer, who was sitting at the foot of the tree to which we had bound him. He looked up anxiously at us as we approached, and inquired if we had determined to go in?

"We have determined," answered Thomas. "To allow you half an hour to prepare for death. Make the most of it. You have many sins to repent of, and the time is short."

It is impossible to describe the look of mingled terror, amaze-

ment and credulity, with which the overseer heard these words. One moment, with a voice of authority, he bade us untie him; the next, he forced a laugh, and affected to treat what Thomas said, as a mere jest; then yielding to his fears, he wept like a child, and cried and begged for mercy.

"Have you shown it?" answered Thomas. 'Did you show it to my poor wife? You murdered her, and for her life you must answer with your own."

Mr. Martin called God to witness, that he was not guilty of this charge He had punished Thomas's wife he confessed; but he did only what his duty as an overseer demanded; and it was impossible he said, that the few cuts he gave her, could have caused her death.

"The few cuts!" cried Thomas. "Thank God, Mr. Martin, that we do not torture you as you tortured her! Speak no more, or you will but aggravate your sufferings. Confess your crimes! Say your prayers! Do not spend your last moments in adding falsehood to murder!"

The overseer cowered beneath this energetic reproof. He covered his face with his hands, bent down his head, and passed a few moments in a silence which was only interrupted by an inarticulate sobbing. Perhaps, he was trying to prepare himself to die. But life was too sweet to be surrendered without another effort to save it. He saw that it was useless to appeal to Thomas; but rousing himself once more, he turned to me. He begged me to remember the confidence, he had once placed in me, and the favors, which as he said, he had shown me. He promised to purchase us both, to give us our liberty, any thing, every thing, if we would only spare his life!

His tears and piteous lamentations moved me. My head grew dizzy, and I felt such a faintness and heart-sinking, that, I was obliged to support myself against a tree. Thomas stood by, with his arms folded and resting on the gun. He made no answer to the reiterated prayers and promises of the overseer. Indeed he did not appear to notice them. His eyes were fixed, and he seemed lost in thought.

After a considerable interval, during which the unhappy over eer continued to repeat his prayers and lamentations, Thomas roused himself. He stepped back a few paces, and raised the gun. "The half hour is out," he said;—"Mr. Martin are you ready?"

"No! oh no! Spare me, oh spare me! -one half hour longer—I have much—"

He did not live to finish the sentence. The gun flashed; the ball penetrated his brain, and he fell dead without a struggle.

CHAPTER THIRD.

We scraped a shallow grave, in which we placed the body of the overseer. We dragged the dead hound to the same spot, and laid him with his master. They were fit companions.

We now resumed our flight.—not as some may perhaps suppose, with the frightened and conscience-stricken haste of murderers, but with that lofty feeling of manhood vindicated, and tyranny visited with a just retribution, which animated the soul of the Israeltish hero, whilst he fled for refuge into the country of the Midanites; and which burned in the bosoms of Wallace and Tell, as they pursued their midnight flight among the friendly cliffs and freedom-breathing summits of their native mountains.

There were no mountains to receive and shelter us. Bu- still we fled through the swamps and barrens of Carolina, resolved to put, as soon as possible, some good miles between us and the neighborhood of Loosahachee. It was more than twenty-four hours since we had tasted food; yet such was the excitement of our minds that we did not faint, and were hardly sensible of weaknesss or fatigue.

We kept a northwesterly direction, steering our course by the stars, and we must have made a good distance; for we did not once stop to rest, but pushed forward at a very rapid pace all night. Our way lay through the open "piney woods;" through which we could travel almost as fast as on a road. Sometimes a swamp or the appearance of a plantation, would compel us to deviate from our track, but as soon as we could, we resumed our original direction.

The darkness of the night, which for the last hour or two that it lasted, had been increased by a foggy mist, was jus- beginning to yield to the first indistinct grey dawn of the morning. We were passing along a little depression in the level of pine barrens, now dry, but in the wet season, probably the bed of a temporary stream, looking for a place to conceal ourselves, —when we suddenly came upon a man, lying, as it seemed, asleep in the midst of a clump of bushes, with his head resting

on a bag of corn. We recognized him at once. He was a slave belonging to a plantation next adjoining Loosahochee, with whom e ad had some slight acquaintance, but who, as we were informed, had been a runaway, for some two or three months past. Thomas shook him by the shoulder, and he wakened in a terrible fright, we told him not to be alarmed, for we were runaways like himself, and very much in need of his assistance, being half dead with hunger, and in a country with which we were totally unacquainted. At first the man appeared very reserved and suspicious. He feared, it seemed, less we might be decoys, sent out on purpose to entrap him. At last however, we succeeded in dissipating his doubts; and no no sooner was he satisfied with the account we gave of ourselves, than he bade us follow him, and we should presently have food.

With his bag of corn upon his shoulder, he pursued the shallow ravine in which we had found him, for a mile or more, till at length it widened into what it seemed a large swamp, or rather a pond grown up with trees. We now left the ravine, and followed along on the edge of the pond for some distance, when presently our guide began wading in the water, and called to us to follow him. We plunged in; but before going far, he laid down his bag of corn upon a fallen tree, and going back, he carefully effaced the marks which our footsteps had made upon the muddy edge of the pond. He now led us forward, through mud and water up to our waists, for near half a mile. The gigantic trees among which we were wading, sprung up like columns, from the surface of the water, with round, straight, whitish-colored, branchless trunks, their leafy tops forming a thick canopy over head. There was scarcely any undergrowth, except a species of enormous vines, which ran, twining like great cables about the bodies of the trees, and reaching to the very tops, helped with their foliage to thicken the canopy above us. So effectually was the light excluded, and so close did the trunks of the trees stand together, that one could see but a very little way in this watery forest.

The water began to grow deeper, and the wood more gloomy, and we were wondering whither our guide was leading us, when presently we came to a little island which rose a few feet from the surface of the water, so regular and mound-like that it had quite the appearance of an artificial structure. Perhaps it was the work of the ancient inhabitants of the country, and the site of one of their forts or fastnesses. It was about an acre in extent, and was covered with a thick growth of trees,

quite different however, from those of the lake by which it was surrounded, and much inferior in size and majesty. Its edges were bordered by low shrubs and bushes, whose abundant foliage gave the islet the appearance of a mass of green.—Our guide pointed out to us a little opening in the bushes, through which we ascended; and after having gained the dry land, he led us through the thicket along a narrow and winding path till presently we came to a rude cabin built of bark and branches. He now gave a peculiar whistle, which was immediately answered, and two or three men presently made their appearance.

They seemed a good deal surprised at seeing us, and me especially, whom apparently they took for a freeman. But our guide assured them that we were friends and fellow-sufferers, and led the way into the cabin. Our new hosts received us kindly, and having heard how long we had been without food, before asking us any further questions, they hastened to satisfy our hunger. They produced beef and hominy in abundance, on which we feasted to our hearts' content.

We were then called upon to give an account of ourselves. Accordingly we made a relation of our adventures,—omitting however, any mention of the fate of the overseer; and as our guide, who knew us could confirm a part of our story, our account was pronounced satisfactory, and we were presently admitted to the privilege of joining their fraternity.

There were six of them, beside ourselves; all brave fellows, who, weary of daily task-work, and the tyranny of overseers, had taken to the woods, and had succeeded in regaining a savage and stealthy freedom, which, with all its hardships and dangers, was a thousand times to be preferred to the forced labor and wretched servitude from which they had escaped. Our guide was the only one we had ever seen until now. The leader of the band had fled from his master's plantation in the neighborhood, with a single companion, some two or three years before. They did not then know of the existence of this retreat; but being sharply pursued, they had attempted to cross the pond, or swamp by which it was surrounded,—a thing, I suppose which had never been tried before. In this attempt they were fortunate enough to light upon the islet, which being unknown to any one else, had ever since served them as a secure retreat. They soon picked up a recruit or two, and had afterwards been joined by their companions.

Our guide, it seems, had been to a neighboring plantation to trade for corn,—a traffic which our friends carried on with the

slaves of several of the nearest plantations. After the business was concluded, the men with whom he had been dealing, had produced a bottle of whiskey, of which our guide had drank so freely, that he had not gone far on his way home, before his legs failed him. He sunk down in the place whare we had found him, and fell fast asleep.

Drinking whiskey, away from home, according to the prudent laws of this swamp-encircled commonwealth, was a high misdemeanor, punishable with thirty-nine lashes, which were forthwith inflicted upon our guide, with a good deal of emphasis. He took it in good part though, as being the execution of a law to which he had himself assented, and which he knew was enacted as much for his own benefit, as for the benefit of those who had just now carried it into execution.

The life upon which we now entered, had at least the charm of novelty. In the day time, we eat, slept, told stories and recounted our escapes; or employed ourselves in dressing skins, making clothes, and curing provisions. But the night was our season of adventure and enterprise. As the autumn was coming on, we made frequent visits to the neighboring corn fields and potato patches, which we felt no scruples whatever in laying under severe contribution. This however was only for a month or two. Our regular and certain supply was in the herds of half wild cattle, which wander through the "piney woods," and feed upon the coarse grass which they furnish. We killed as many of these cattle as was needed, their flesh cut into long strips we dried in the sun. Thus cured, it is a palatable food; and we not only kept a stock on hand for our own consumption, but it furnished the principal article of a constant but cautious traffic, which, as I have already mentioned, we carried on with the slaves of several neighboring plantations.

Ths wild life of the woods has its privations and its sufferings, but has too, its charms and its pleasures; and in its very worst aspect, it is a thousand and ten thousand times to be preferred to that miscalled civilization, which degrades the noble savage into a cringing and broken-spirited slave;—a civilization, which purchases the indolence and luxury of a single master, with the sighs and tears, the forced and unwilling labor, the degradation, misery and despair of a hundred of his fel ow men! Yes—there is more of true manhood in the bold bosom of a single outlaw, than in a whole nation of cowardly tyrants and crouching slaves!

CHAPTER FOURTH.

By the end of winter, the herds of cattle which were accustomed to frequent our neighborhood, were a good deal thinned; and the pasturage had now become so bare and withered, that what remained of them were little better than walking skeletons, and in fact, scarcely worth the trouble of killing.

Moreover, the overseer of the neighboring plantations, were beginning to be very well aware that they were exposed to some pretty regular and diligent depredators. We learned from the slaves with whom we trafficked, that there was a good deal of talk about the rapid disappearance of the cattle; and that preparations were making for a grand hunt in search of the plunderers.

With the double object of disappointing these preparations, and of getting among some fresh herds of cattle, it was resolved that five of us should make an excursion to a considerable distance, while the other two remained at home and kept close.

One of our number undertook to lead us into the neighborhood of a plantation beyond the Santee, on which he had been raised. He knew all the country about it perfect y well. There were several good hiding places, he said, in which we could conceal ourselves in the day time; and the extensive woods and wastes furnished a good range, and abundance of cattle.

We set off under his guidance, and kept on for several days, or nights rather, in a northwardly direction. On the fifth or sixth evening of our journey, we started soon after sun-set, and having travelled till a little past midnight, through a country of abrupt and barren sand hills, our guide told us that we were now in the neighborhood into which he intended to carry us. But as the moon had gone down, and it was cloudy and quite dark, he was rather uncertain as to the precise place we were at; and we should do best, he said, to camp where we were, till day-light, when he would lead us to some better place of concealment.

This advice was very acceptable;—for by this time, we were way-worn, tired, and sleepy. We kindled a fire, cooked the last of the provisions we had brought with us, and having appointed one of our number to keep watch, the rest of us lay down and were soon fast asleep.

I, at least, was sleeping soundly, and dreaming of poor Cassy and our infant child, when my dream was interrupted, and I was roused from my slumbers, by what seemed a discharge of fire-arms and a galloping of horses. I sprang upon my feet, hardly knowing whether I was awake. At the same moment, my eye fell upon Thomas, who had been sleeping beside me, and I perceived that his clothes were all stained with blood. He had already gained his feet, and without stopping to hear or see any thing further, we sprung together into the nearest thicket, and fled for some time, we scarcely knew where or why. At last, Thomas cried out that he could go no further. The bleeding of his wounds had weakened him much, and they were now growing stiff and painful. The morning was just beginning to dawn. We sat down upon the ground, and endeavored to bind up his wounds the best we were able. A ball, or buck-shot had passed through the fleshy part of his left arm, between the shoulder and elbow. Another shot had struck him in the side,—but as far as we could judge, had glanced on one of his ribs, and so passed off without doing any mortal injury. These wounds had bled profusely, and were now very painful. We bound them up as well as we could, and looking round we found a little stream of water with which to wash away the blood, and quench our hirst.

Thus recruited and refreshed, we began to consider which way we should turn, and what we were to do. We did not dare to go back to the camp where we had slept—indeed we were very doubtful whether we were able to do so; for the morning had been dark, and we had fled with heedless haste, taking very little note of our direction. Our island retreat was at the distance of some seven or eight days journey, and, as we had travelled in the night, and not always in precisely the same direction, it would be no very easy matter to find our way back again. However, Thomas prided himself upon his woodmanship, and though he had not observed the course of journey quite so closely as he could have wished, he still thought that he might succeed in finding the way back.

But his wounds were too recent, and he felt too weak, to think of starting off immediately. Besides it was already broad day-light; and we had the best of reasons for travelling only by night. So we sought out a thicket in which we concealed ourselves till night-fall.

As the evening came on, Thomas declared that he felt much better and stronger, and we resolved to set out at once, on

our return. In the first place, however, we determined to make an attempt to find the camp of the proceeding night, in hopes that some of our companions might have escaped, as well as ourselves, and that by some good luck, we might chance to fall in with them.

After wandering about for some time, we at length, found the camp. Two dead bodies, stiff and bloody, lay by the extinguishing embers of the fire. They seemed to have been shot dead as they slept, and scarcely to have moved a limb. The bushes about were stained and spattered with blood ; and, by the moonlight, we traced the bloody flight of one of our luckless companions, for a considerable distance. This must have been our sentinel, who had probably dropped a sleep, and thus exposed us to be surprised.

Perhaps he might be lurking somewhere in the bushes wounded and helpless. This thought emboldened us. We shouted and called aloud, but our voices echoed through the woods, and died away unanswered. We returned again to the camp, and gazed once more upon the distorted faces of our dead companions. We could not bear to leave them unburied. I hastily scraped a shallow trench, and there we placed them. We dropped a tear upon their graves, and sad, dismayed and dejected, we set out upon our long, weary and uncertain journey.

CHAPTER FIFTH.

We travelled slowly all night, and soon after day-light lay down to sleep, but awoke just before sunset and determined to risk starting; as we were very hungry, and hoped we might obtain something to eat, but had not gone far before we suddenly came upon three travellers on horseback, who eyed us sharply and demanded who we were. As I did not answer them to their satisfaction, and my statements being confused, they sprang from their horses and declared we were runaways, at the same time seizing me, and attempting to hold Thomas, who eluded their grasp and attacked them with his staff. After a violent struggle they bound us both and carried us to a miserable tavern, about half a mile distant, where we put up for the night.

It appeared in the course of the conversation between the landlady and her guests, that the murderous kind of attack to which our companions had fallen victims, but which had been intended for another party of runaways, is an operation

occasionally practised in Lower Carolina, when a party of slave hunters fall in with a gang of fugitive slaves too large to be easily arrested.

The dispersion of the attacking party, and each one shooting and returning by himself, is only the effect of an ancient and traditionary prejudice. By the law of Carolina, the killing a slave is regarded as murder; and though probably, this law was never enforced, and would doubtless be treated by a jury of modern slave-holders, as an old-fashioned and fanatical absurdity, there still linger, in the breasts of the people, some remains of horror at the idea of deliberate bloodshed, and a sort of superstitious apprehension of the possible enforcement of this antiquated law. To blindfold their own consciences, and to avoid the possibility of a judicial investigation, each man of an attacking party takes care to see none of the others when they fire; and no one goes to the place to ascertain how many have been killed or disabled. The poor wretches who are not so fortunate as to be shot dead upon the spot, are left to the lingering torments of thirst, fever, starvation and festering wounds; and when at length they die, their skeletons lie bleaching in the Carolina sun, proud proofs of slave-holding civilization and humanity.

While our captors were at supper, the little girl, the landlady's daughter, came to look at us, as we lay in the passage. She was a pretty child, and her soft blue eyes filled with tears as she looked upon us. I asked her for water. She ran to get it for us, and inquired if we did not want something to eat. I told her that we were half dead with hunger, and she no sooner heard it, than she hastened away, and soon returned with a large cake of bread.

By listening closely to the conversation of the travellers over a jug of whiskey, we learned that we were on the great northern road leading from that town into North Carolina.

As soon as the whiskey jug was emptied, the travellers made preparations for sleeping. There were but two rooms in the house. The landlady and her daughter had one; and some beds were prepared for the guests, in the other. We were carried into their room, and after again lamenting that the landlady could not furnish them with chains, they carefully examined and retightened the ropes with which we were bound, and then undressed and threw themselves upon their beds. They were probably fatigued with their journey, and the whiskey increased their drowsy inclination; so that before long, they all gave evident tokens of being in a sound slumber.

I envied them that happiness; for the tightness of my bonds,

and the uneasy position in which I was obliged to lie, prevented me from sleeping. The moonbeams shone in at the window, and made every object distinctly visible. Thomas and myself were lamenting, in whispers, our wretched condition, and consulting hopelessly together, when we saw the door of the room cautiously and silently opening. In a moment, the landlady's little daughter made her appearance. She came towards us with noiseless steps, and one hand raised, as if motioning to us to be silent. In the other, she held a knife, and stooping down she hastily cut the cords by which we were bound.

We did not dare to speak, but our hearts beat hard, and I am sure our looks expresed the gratitude we felt. We gained our feet with as little noise as possible, and were stealing towards the door, when a new thought struck Thomas. He laid his hand upon my shoulder to draw my attention, and then began to pick up the coat, shoes, and other clothes of one of our captors. At once I understood his intention, and imitated his example. The little girl seemed astonished and displeased at this proceeding, and motioned to us to desist. But without seeming to understand her gestures, we gained the door, with the clothes in our hands, and passing out of the passage, we walked slowly and cautiously for some distance, taking good heed, lest the sound of our footsteps might give an alarm. In the mean time, the little girl patted the house dog on the head, and kept him quiet. When we had gained a sufficient distance, we started upon a run, which we did not give over till we were fairly out of breath.

A soon as we had recovered ourselves a little, we stripped off our ragged dresses, and hid them in the bushes. Luckily the clothes which we had brought off in our flight, fitted us very tolerably, and gave us a much more respectable, and less suspicious appearance. We now went on for two or three miles, till we came to a road that crossed the one upon which we were travelling, and ran off towards the south.

In all this time, Thomas had said nothing; nor did he scarcely seem to notice my remarks, or to hear the questions, which, from time to time, I put to him. When we came to the cross-road, he suddenly stopped, and took me by the arm. I supposed that he was going to consult with me, as to the course which we should take; and great was my surprise to hear him say, "Archy, here I leave you." I have concluded it is best to separate to secure our safety.

CHAPTER SIXTH.

Note. After the separation of *Wild Tom and Archy*, the latter pursued his way to the free states where he arrived in safety. But finding himself not secure in his freedom, went to Europe and passed several years in the British service where he distinguished himself and received promotion. Eventually he became wealthy by a division of prize money, and having been absent more than twenty years, he felt an insatiable desire to visit again the scenes of his former sufferings and exploits, accordingly, having attained letters of credit from several distinguished persons, he set out on his intended tour. We will allow him to relate his story in his own words:

As I began to approach the neighborhood of Loosahache, I perceived, at a distance, a group of 14 or 15 men on horseback, followed by a pack of blood-hounds. On the back of one of the horses, strapped, was the lifeless body of a man, covered with blood which still oozed from a wound he had received in the breast. Side by side with the corpse rode a black man, who was tied, wounded and bleeding. His haughty and dogged aspect of defiance, seemed to contrast strangely with another prisoner who seemed very much dejected. On enquiry I was told that the negro lashed to the horse with the corpse had killed him, and that he had been an overseer near by. He told me that a gang of runaway negroes, headed by a desperate fellow called "Wild Tom," had infested the neighborhood for a long time, and that they had started in pursuit of them, when one of the dogs scented a negro in the marsh and he was taken. He denied all knowledge of Tom, and he said he was a runaway, and implored them to give him food as he was almost starved.

These protestations, however, did not satisfy, and to make him confess, he was tied up and whipped till he fainted; but while begging for mercy, he still insisted on the truth of his story, and that he had nothing further to tell.

This experiment having failed, he was placed on the stump of a fallen tree, and a rope being put round his neck and fastened to a branch above, he was threatened with instant hanging if he did not confess. Still he continued dogged as ever, when one of the company pushed him off the stump, and allowed him to swing till he grew black in the face. He was then placed back upon the stump, the rope loosened, and himself supported by the two or three slaves who accompanied the party. At length, beginning to recover himself, whether out of terror of death, or the confusion of his ideas, or the destruction of his self-control by the pressure of blood upon the brain, he began to confess, freely enough, that he had just come from the swamp island, and that Wild Tom was there; but he denied

all knowledge of any other runaways, or that Wild Tom had any body with him.

To make all sure, eight or ten of the company were sent to patrol on horseback round the edges of the swamp, together with all the dogs but one, while five or six of the strongest and most resolute proposed to penetrate the interior, and to storm the Island Retreat. The prisoner, with the rope still about his neck, the other end made fast to the waist of one of the stoutest of the company, was required to serve as guide; and though he protested that he knew nothing inparticular of the approaches to the island, he was threatened with instant death, in case he did not conduct them safely and expeditiously across. The fellow, however, whether through ignorance or design, led them into very deep water, in some places fairly up to their necks, through which they were obliged to wade, holding their rifles and powder horns over their heads; and in spite of every effort to keep him quiet, as the party drew near the island, he would insist on crying out, as if giving directions as to the passage, but, as was strongly suspected, with the real design of alarming his confederate. And, indeed, before the party could make good their footing on the island, he had already taken the alarm, and had plunged into the water on the other side. He had gained a considerable distance before he was seen, and as he dodged behind the great trees of the swamp, several rifle shots fired at him failed to take effect. In plunged the others in fresh pursuit, while the fugitive, engrossed by this danger behind, made the best of his way through the mud and water, till he gained the firm land on the other side of the swamp, where he encountered a new danger, being seen by one of the scouts patrolling along the edge. As he bounded through the piney woods, like a deer, a rifle shot gazed his side, and though it did not bring him down, yet it materially checked the swiftness of his flight. Four or five horsemen were soon upon his track. Snapdragon, the overseer, leading in the chase, soon came up with the flying negro; and after vainly calling to him to yield, and firing his pistols with only slight effect, sprang from his horse, and attempted to seize him. Snapdragon was a powerful man, but he had now found his match. Wild Tom, exhausted and wounded as he was, caught his assailant in his arms, and as they rolled upon the ground, the negro's knife was not long in finding its way to the overseer's heart. But already the dogs and the other pursuers were upon him, and before he could disengage himself, he was made a prisoner, and securely bound. It was not long before the whole party was assembled, when some of the more violent proposed to revenge the dead overseer by putting the

prisoner to death on the spot. But the pleasure and glory of making a parade and exhibition of their prize, and the necessity, too, in order to secure the promised reward, to identify him as general Carter's runaway, had stayed this summary procedure; and it had been resolved forthwith to hasten to the village, which served as seat of justice for the county, to commit the prisoners to jail.

As soon as an opportunity occurred, I handed Tom a calabash of water, which was rudely dashed from his hand by one of the slave drivers.

I felt at that same moment a hand rudely laid on my shoulder, while a voice, which I recognized as that of the same man who had dashed the calabash of water from Thomas's grasp, exclaiming, with a volley of oaths, "What the devil are you doing here in close confab with this murderer? I tell you, stranger, you don't leave here without giving an account of yourself!"

A number of men, now rushed up to Thomas, and began to unfasten his chains and to conduct him towards the door of the tavern.

These were the more drunken and infuriated portion of the company who, enraged at the sight of the dead overseer, wished to try and execute him at once, but the others wished to await the arrival of general Carter, for whom a messenger had been sent, and to delay final proceedings till the prisoner had first been identified as general Carter's property, lest otherwise there might be some difficulty in recovering the promised reward.

The more violent and drunken party had, however, prevailed. A court of three freeholders was now organized on the spot, and Thomas again surrounded by a rabble of blacks and whites, was now brought before this august tribunal. I was myself at the same time taken into custody as a suspected person, with an intimation that my case should be attended to as soon as that of the negro was disposed of.

"Whom do you belong to?" Such was the first question which the honorable court addressed to the prisoner.

"I belong," answered Thomas, with much solemnity, "to the God who made us all!"

The mock court, after hearing a witness or two, pronounced him guilty of the murder of the overseer, after which they passed sentence of death. A pile of wood was lighted, and the victim of slave-holding vengeance was placed in the midst of it, while he looked upon his persecutors with a smile of contemptuous defiance and his spirit was ushered into the presence of an avenging God!

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